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of the Mandrake with the "dudain" of Genesis. Both Harris and Frazer accept this identity without question. The latter derives the German name "from a word identical with our word 'rune,' meaning 'the all-wise one,' with the connotation of 'witch' or 'wizard.'" Starck goes into the matter more fully and accepts Kluge's derivation of the second part of the name from the Gothic *rûna*, secret. Starck examines the various attempts at a mythological explanation of the Mandrake superstition and correctly, we think, deprecates the use of modern popular beliefs to establish a primitive mythological origin. His conclusion is: that the Mandrake superstition is not of Germanic origin; that it arose in the Orient and at first was not connected with a particular plant; that it became attached to the Mandrake probably on account of its forked shape; and that it made its way to Europe via Egypt and North Africa, as well as by a second route through Greece and Rome. In Europe the legend experiences the fate of so many other stories and from "Die Lust zum Fabulieren" received many accretions which were borrowed elsewhere or simply invented for the purpose. It is difficult to recognize the origin of the legend through the disguise of successive changes, and European literature here again owes a frequently used theme to the story-loving Orient.

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The King's Mirror (*Speculum Regale* — *Konungs Skuggsjá*).

Translated from the Old Norwegian by L. M. LARSON. (Scandinavian Monographs, vol. 3) New York, The American-Scandinavian Foundation, Oxford University Press, 1917. \$3.00.

"The importance of the *Kings Mirror* lies in the insight that it gives into the state of culture and civilization of the North in the later Middle Ages. The interest follows seven different lines; physical science, especially such matters as are of importance to navigators; geography, particularly the geography of the Arctic lands and waters; the organization of the king's household and the privileges and duties of the king's henchmen; military engines, weapons and armor used in offensive and defensive warfare; ethical ideas, especially rules of conduct for courtiers and merchants; the

royal office, the duties of the king and the divine origin of kingship; and the place of the church in the Norwegian state."

A distinct service has been rendered the student of the Middle Ages by the publication of Professor Larson's translation of this ancient philosophic-didactic dialogue whose scope is sufficiently indicated in the above lines; for it has been practically inaccessible to those not conversant with Old Norse. The Sorö edition of 1768, containing the Danish and Latin translation—an excellent piece of work considering its time—is now a rare and costly tome; and the translation into Norwegian landsmaal (by Audne, 1909-13) will hardly benefit many.

With Brenner's edition, based on all available mss. and Flom's phototypic reproductions of the main ms. (Urbana, 1915) the study of the Konungs Skuggsjá, which is the only considerable extant Old Norwegian text, is now placed on an entirely safe basis. (For reasons not indicated Larson has based his translation on the Kristiania edition). Notwithstanding, there was many a hard nut to crack before there could be prepared a rendering so eminently satisfactory and readable as the one here offered. For one thing, it must have been difficult to fix on the proper 'speech-level.' There is an occasional Johnsonian pomposity in this ancient dialogue which contrasts oddly with the inherent terseness and dryness of its Old Norse medium. In the matter of vocabulary more often than not the cumbersome Latin compounds chosen seem to reflect the flavor of the original quite well.

Only in a few instances can one quarrel with the resulting style. The reviewer would e. g., prefer the positive terms 'folly,' 'trouble,' 'lawlessness,' 'war,' etc., to the negatives 'unwisdom,' 'unrest,' 'unlaw,' 'unpeace' ¹ for rendering Old Norse *úræð*, *úró*, *úlag*, *úfræðr*—words by no means characteristic of the style of this monument. The deliberately anonymous author—no doubt an old courtier who stood on decorum and punctilio—would, I fancy, have taken exception to the rendition of *tunguvarp* by 'palaver' (p. 229), for which I suggest 'twaddle'; and of *meira um at hafa* by 'to make a fuss about' (p. 187), instead of simply 'say no more.' The word 'foisterer' (p. 79) for O. N. *falsari* 'impostor' is not, to my knowledge, found in the thesaurus of the English language. —*Valslonga* (p. 220) would be more conveniently translated 'cata-

¹ P. 203 *et passim*.

pult' instead of 'trebucket,' which itself necessitates a footnote.—Only two mistakes were noted. In the passage *Mep sterku beizli þarf hestr búinn at vera, þat sem örugt sé til halds, bæði upp at halda með, ef þarf, ok svá um at kasta, ef þess þarf hann við*² the words spaced do not mean 'to throw the horse,' but 'to wheel' him. *At koma niðr*³ does not mean 'to come down' but 'to come to the point, to have the gist.'

The footnotes are exceedingly instructive and might well have been even more copious. *E. g.*, one on the author's explanation that O. N. *hirdmaðr* "means the same as keeper and guardian" (p. 176) might have pointed out that the term is, rather, loaned from the Anglo-Saxon *hîrêd* < *hîwrêd* meaning 'household of the prince,' and has nothing to do with O. N. *hirðir* 'shepherd.' Or, the editor might possibly have thrown light on the origin of the curious legend that Peter was commanded by Christ to open the mouth of the first fish caught, in order to find in it Cæsar's penny; on the belief concerning the Serpent that 'the spittle which comes forth from the mouth of a fasting man shall prove a dangerous venom to thy life etc.' (p. 268); on the meaning of the expression '*á hverfanða hvel*' ('inconstancy, treachery') in the passage "for God shows his wrath in this way, that where the four boundaries of the territories of these (rival) chiefs touch, he places a moving wheel which turns on a restless axle"⁴—by reference to *Hávamál* stanza 82; on whether, in the expression *góðar hosar ok linar, görvar af blautu lérepti ok vel svörtuðu*,⁵ *svartaðr* does not, perhaps, mean 'dyed' rather than 'blackened'; etc., etc.

Mention ought to have been made that also in the matter of division into chapters the Kristiania edition of Keyser, Munch, and Unger was followed—the original has no such arrangement. Nor does it always appear a happy one, especially in the earlier chapters. In particular, the headings of chapters VIII and XI are ill-chosen. Succinct epitomes on the margin would have better agreed with the somewhat rambling discussions of what is after all a Mediæval treatise and not a modern text-book!

Too much praise cannot be given to the scholarly and well-pro-

² Kristiania edition, p. 87; translation, p. 218.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 121 and 277.

⁴ Kristiania edition, p. 76; translation, p. 199.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 87 and 219.

portioned introduction which admirably sets forth the results of many investigations scattered through numerous books and articles. Sources, outstanding features, authorship, date and place of composition are given brief but incisive consideration. As to the last mentioned items, the cautious arguments of the editor to prove "that the closing chapters of the King's Mirror were written after 1240, the year when Duke Skule was slain . . . but some time before 1247, the year of Hakon's coronation and final reconciliation with the church" seem entirely convincing. The allusions to Joab and Adonijah are too pointedly plain to allow of any other reference than to Skule. And again, the writer betrays too keen an insight into the politics of his day to embarrass king Hakon by a *post festum* attack on the church after his reconciliation with it!

The volume is superbly printed and altogether a splendid piece of book-making.

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An Italian Grammar. By RUTH SHEPARD PHELPS. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1917. viii + 328 pp.

Professor Phelps expresses in the Preface of her *Italian Grammar* the hope that the arrangement of topics in the book will make it equally serviceable for the classroom and for private study, and will give it certain of the advantages of a "first book" and a reference grammar. She has attempted to reach her object by breaking up the more difficult subjects, presenting them at first piecemeal and giving more thoroughgoing treatment in later chapters. This system, however, has not been followed consistently, but in all the cases where it has seemed desirable to present a complete treatment at first, the paragraphs dealing with the more subtle points are marked with a star and they may be assigned only to be read over, or even altogether omitted.

The problem of combining an elementary grammar with a reference book is a difficult one, and the best solution would seem to be a more distinct separation of the elementary and advanced parts. It is to be regretted that Professor Phelps did not follow the model of some of the French and Spanish grammars in which this plan has been adopted. As the book stands now, some of the lessons will be found too long even if the starred paragraphs are omitted—